

Introduction

This handbook is intended to serve as a pocket guide for SAMHSA employees/staff who conduct official Government business travel. It provides a summary of regulatory guidance as contained in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), and corresponding basic policies and procedures as referenced in the HHS Travel Manual. For additional information, you can access the HHS Travel Manual **on the SAMHSA intranet in the Management Administrative Policy (MAPS), select Administrative Services, scroll down to the Travel section, select HHS Travel Manual.**

NOTE: Whereas much of the policy guidance in this handbook applies to PHS Commissioned Officers (COs), because COs are not governed by the FTR, they should refer to the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) for additional information. The JFTR can be accessed at the following web site <http://perdiem.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/trvlregs.html>

Throughout this handbook, the traveler is referred to as "you."

Prudent Person Rule

When traveling on official business you **must** exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would if traveling on personal business. Excessive costs, circuitous routes, delays for personal reasons, luxury accommodations, and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable. You will be held liable for any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

General Policy

You will be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in carrying out official business within the limits prescribed by law and Government-wide regulations. Your temporary duty (TDY) travel **must** be authorized by the appropriate delegated official prior to the trip in the form of a Travel Authorization (Order). This requirement confirms official Government business and is necessary to fully protect your rights as a traveler. Unauthorized TDY travel places you at risk of not being reimbursed for expenses incurred and other legal benefits should there be an emergency.

Planning/Lead-Time

You **must** submit a travel request or appropriate Office/Center travel form (including HHS-348 sponsored travel, Attachment A) through the appropriate channels, allowing enough time for necessary clearances and for travel arrangements to be made. Domestic and non-foreign travel requests should reach the supervisor by a minimum of **10** working days prior to the trip start date. For additional information on planning time and travel request form, contact the respective Administrative Officer in DOS.

For planning/lead times on foreign travel, see the SAMHSA Guidelines for International Travel, or International Travel Requirements located on page 8 of this Travel Guide.

Mandatory Use of GovTrip

You must make reservations through GovTrip for all TDY travel, including common carrier transportation (e.g., airplane, train, bus), lodging, and rental car services. Generally, this **is with** a Travel Management Center (TMC) that is under contract with HHS (currently Omega). Check with your appropriate Administrative Officer or USS Travel Staff for exceptions to this rule.

Mandatory Use of Contract City-Pair Airfares

You **must** use contract city-pair airfares (Government contract airfares) unless the use of non-contract airfares is properly justified (see FTR 301-10.107). This will be done automatically with making reservations through the TMC.

Government-Issued Travel Charge Card

If you expect to **travel 6 or more times** per year, you are considered a "frequent traveler" and must apply for and use a Government-issued travel charge card.

The Government-issued travel charge card is only to be used when you are in TDY travel status and should be used to pay for and/or obtain:

- X lodging accommodations
- X meals (if applicable)
- X rental car services
- X travel advances from either ATM machines or financial institutions
- X ground transportation
- X air fare, common carrier

You **must not** use the travel charge card for personal purchases, non-official travel related services, or purchases/services for other individuals or local travel.

Travel Advances

If you are ineligible for a Government-issued travel charge card, in most circumstances, a travel advance may be authorized to cover anticipated out-of-pocket expenses. In order for the travel advances to be processed, the travel authorization request must be submitted to PSC ten days prior to trip departure. (Exceptions to travel advance procedures applicable to employees who refuse to apply for and/or use the travel charge card, and those whose card is cancelled due to misuse/abuse, are discussed in HHS Travel Manual section 3-**20-10**. The advanced amount will generally apply to expenses associated with lodging, meals, incidental expenses, and

miscellaneous costs, e.g., ground transportation. You should check with your respective Administrative Officer or USS Travel Staff for applicable procedures. The air or rail transportation will be paid from SAMHSA's Centrally Billed Account (CBA).

Per Diem Allowance

You are entitled to a per diem allowance when conducting official business in TDY travel status for over 12 hours. The four types of allowances are as follows:

- ! Lodgings-plus: This is the most commonly used method of per diem. It consists of a system for computing the allowance for each travel day based on a fixed rate the traveler pays for lodging, plus an allowance for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE), for the specific geographic location concerned. (NOTE: Rates are established by: General Services Administration - domestic sites; Department of Defense - non-foreign sites; and Department of State - international sites.)
- ! Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA): Prior to the trip, when certain criteria are met, you may be authorized up to a 25% increase of the Government lodging rate (under the lodgings-plus allowance) for the geographic area. Actual Expense Allowance (AEA): Prior to the trip, in limited and well-justified circumstances, you may be authorized up to 300% of the per diem rate for the geographic area.
- ! Increase Lodging Expenses: There will be some instances when you will not be able to arrange for lodging within the approved lodging rates. You must initiate a memorandum describing the reason(s) addressed to the Director, Division of Operational Support (DOS), Office of Program Services, SAMHSA, to receive approval prior to preparation of the travel authorization indicating actual expense. The memorandum is sent to the appropriate Administrative Officer in DOS for review, before sending to the Director, DOS, for approval. The request must be received in the Administrative Office no less than fifteen working days prior to the planned initiation of the Travel Authorization.

Under SAMHSA policy, such requests for increased lodging should not exceed 150 percent of the applicable maximum lodging rate for the travel location. When the lodging exceeds 150 percent, approval must be obtained from the Executive Officer, SAMHSA.

Further instructions on the procedures of obtaining increased lodging are located on the **SAMHSA** intranet in the travel policy section at <http://intra2.samhsa.gov/SGS/AdminSVC/increaselogexp.aspx>, as well as a sample of the increase lodging request memorandum.

- ! Reduced per diem: In some extended travel scenarios, e.g., over 30 days at a single location, you may be authorized a reduced per diem allowance.

The MI&E rate will be reduced for meals that are provided at no cost to you while in travel status, i.e., breakfast is included in the registration fee.

For additional information on per diem allowances, see HHS Travel Manual, Chapter 5.

Miscellaneous Expenses

When authorized or approved, you may be reimbursed for miscellaneous expenses. Receipts should be obtained, if applicable. Examples of such expenses include, but are not limited to, the following items:

- X **Excess Baggage Fees (when required and authorized in advance)**
- X Official business telephone calls (unlimited and if possible, appear on hotel bill)
- X Limited personal call(s) (\$5 per day and should be reflected on hotel bill)
- X Lodging taxes (domestic and non-foreign)
- X Laundry, cleaning, pressing of clothing (domestic travel only; minimum of four consecutive nights required)
- X Baggage expenses for official business materials
- X Services of typists, data processors, or stenographers
- X Services of guides, interpreters, and drivers of vehicles
- X Use of computers, printers, fax machines, and scanners
- X Use of conference center rooms or hotel rooms for official business
- X Faxes, telegrams, cablegrams, or radiograms (obtain receipt, if possible or reflect on hotel bill)
- X Travelers' checks or ATM service fees
- X Energy surcharge and lodging service fees (when fees are not optional)
- X Conversion of currency

Please discuss with your Administrative Officer before incurring unusual costs to determine if reimbursement is definite.

Taxis

Taxis should be used only when other modes of transportation (e.g., public transportation, airport shuttle services), are not reasonably available. Retain all receipts and submit with travel voucher.

Taxis may be used:

- X to and from carrier terminals
- X to meeting sites as necessary
- X to obtain suitable meals only when the meals cannot be obtained at or near the TDY site

Reimbursement is allowable for the taxi fare plus a tip of up to 15% of the fare amount.

Rental Cars

When advantageous to the Government, use of a rental car is permitted. You **must** provide justification and obtain approval on the Travel Authorization prior to the trip. You should make every effort to share a rental car when traveling at or to the same TDY meeting site. You may use the rental car for official travel purposes at the TDY site including travel to and from restaurants near the work site or hotel. You are required to obtain your rental car services via the Travel Management Center (currently OMEGA). There is no justification to purchase insurance coverage nor will it be reimbursed for domestic rental vehicles that are obtained from companies under Government contract. Check with your appropriate Administrative Officer, or USS Travel Staff for special policies and procedures regarding use of rental vehicles in foreign countries.

Use of Privately-Owned Vehicles (POV)

You may be authorized use of a POV when it is determined to be most advantageous to the Government. When a POV is used in lieu of a common carrier, reimbursement will be based on a constructive cost comparison of travel by common carrier versus POV, including transportation, per diem, etc. You may be reimbursed for POV transportation to/from a carrier terminal (e.g., mileage, parking, tolls, etc.) not to exceed the cost of a taxi fare. If another individual drives you to the carrier terminal, the round trip mileage is reimbursable up to the cost of a taxi fare. When several travelers share a POV, only one traveler will be reimbursed for mileage.

Frequent Traveler Programs and Promotional Materials

You are permitted to accept frequent flyer miles or promotional materials received in connection with official travel, as long as they were obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government. The miles may be applied toward future official business trips, for upgrades at no additional cost to the Government, or for personal use. If frequent flyer miles are to be used for upgrading travel, notify the travel preparer prior to finalizing travel reservations. (See HHS Travel Manual, Chapter **3-30-20** for additional information.)

Premium Class Common Carrier Accommodations

You **must** use Coach Class accommodations for travel by air, rail, etc. unless you are specifically authorized to upgrade to Premium Class accommodations. Such authorization must be obtained from the appropriate delegated official prior to the trip, and the circumstances under which it may be authorized are very limited. For additional regulatory guidance, see FTR 301-10. (For additional HHS policy, refer to Travel Manual Chapters **4-00-50**)

Fly America Act

If your travel is financed by Government funds, you **must** use U.S. flag air carrier service for all air travel unless an exception for such use can be applied in accordance with FTR 301-10.136-139. In cases where a U.S. carrier has a code share agreement with a foreign flag carrier, service is considered to meet the Fly America Act requirements. Waivers are available through TMC with approval of OPDIV.

Canceled Reservations or Unused Tickets

You **must** notify your appropriate Administrative Officer or USS Travel Staff and contact the TMC (currently OMEGA) immediately to cancel your common carrier reservations. Any unused tickets **must** be hand-carried or mailed to the TMC for proper credit. In addition, any hotel reservations and registration fees for conferences must be canceled immediately by the traveler to prevent any unnecessary cost liabilities.

Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations

You must make every effort to take advantage of hotel discounts and tax exemptions for Federal official business travel in both domestic and non-foreign sites. Some states and localities offer tax exemptions and require a specific form (for some states this form is available online at www.gsa.gov). The TMC should be able to assist you in identifying locations and/or hotels that offer a tax exemption and/or discounts. It is extremely important for you to carry your Government-issued travel charge card, your Government ID card and a copy of your approved Travel Authorization, to demonstrate your eligibility for those exemptions/discounts.

Travel Expense Reimbursement (Travel Voucher)

You **must** submit your claim for reimbursement within 5 working days following completion of a trip. **If you fail to voucher within 5 working days, your travel reimbursement may not be processed timely.** You should document all expenses incurred during your travel and provide the following receipts to the travel preparer:

- X Common carrier transportation ticket
- X Lodging bill
- X Registration fees
- X Personal calls home (see HHS Travel Manual, Chapter 4-10-00)
- X Laundry, dry cleaning (see HHS Travel Manual, Chapter 4-10-00)
- X Other single item expenses greater than \$75 (mandatory, but approving official may ask for receipts for lesser amounts, if questionable)

You are responsible for reviewing your travel voucher for accuracy before signing it.

Falsification of an item on an expense voucher may result in forfeiture of your claim.

Split Disbursement

The Split Disbursement feature in GovTrip is mandatory for SAMHSA travelers. The split disbursement feature is the process of dividing a travel voucher reimbursement between charge card vendor and the traveler. Examples of credit card reimbursements are transportation, lodging, car rental expenses and other authorized miscellaneous expense transactions charged directly to the card. Traveler costs are per diem, taxi costs, other reimbursable expenses paid for with cash, etc. The balance owed to each (charge card or traveler) is sent directly to the appropriate party. This process allows all or part of your travel reimbursement to be sent directly to JPMorgan Chase bank, via UFMS.

In order to use this feature in GovTrip, you must have a valid Government Charge Card in your GovTrip profile. This feature cannot be used with personal charge cards. If you do not use the Government charge card this feature cannot be used.

Example of Split Disbursement: Traveler is due \$300 in official travel reimbursement and elects to send the Government travel charge card (GOVCC) a split-disbursement to pay the \$200 charged on the traveler's card for hotel, meals, and rental card expenses. The remaining \$100 reimbursement is sent to the traveler's designated financial institution account.

Please note: As a Federal Government traveler you are responsible for paying the charge card vendor timely, regardless of your travel reimbursement.

Personal Phone Calls Home

- 1) Domestic and non-foreign travel: Reimbursement for personal telephone calls is limited to actual expenses not to exceed five dollars times the number of consecutive nights on official business.
- 2) Foreign travel: Calls home from a foreign country must be approved in advance on the Travel Authorization.

You may be reimbursed for personal phone calls home when the following criteria are met:

- X You **must** incur a minimum of one night's lodging, either domestic, non-foreign or foreign; and
- X The call **must** be placed to your residence, the caretaker of your residence, a person with whom you share the residence, or a location where a dependent family member lives; and
- X No other options were available such that a commercial toll service had to be used.

Receipts are required to demonstrate the cost of personal calls. Reimbursement will not be permitted for use of a personal cell phone for phone calls home.

International Travel Requirements

Please see the **SAMHSA GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**, located on the SAMHSA intranet in the Management Administrative Policy (MAPS), select **Administrative Services**, scroll down to the Travel section, select **Group Travel** . intranet , which provides information on the following requirements:

1. Travelers must submit an internal SAMHSA Request for International Travel to their supervisor at least 45 days prior to travel.
2. A completed Notificatoin of Foreign Travel (NFT) form must also be submitted at least 30 days before the proposed departure date. The NFT with all Center/Office approvals must be submitted to Winnie Mitchell, winnie.mitchell@samhsa.hhs.gov the SAMHSA International Officer/OPPB. The electronic form is available at <http://ogha.psc.gov/ogha>.
3. Information for the State Department electronic country clearance system (eCC) must be submitted at least 30 days prior to travel to Winnie Mitchell.

Travel Financed by a Non-Federal Source (HHS-348 Sponsored Travel)

Sponsored travel is acceptance of payment for travel and related expenses from a non-Federal source. Sponsored travel must be authorized by the approving official prior to the trip. A completed HHS-348 form with correct accounting information and a memorandum addressed to **Elaine Parry**, Director, Office of Program Services, from the Deputy Center Director/Office Director certifying that SAMHSA has received no funding from the sponsoring organization. The following attachments must be submitted with the memorandum:

- A written invitation from the non-Federal source stating if the expenses to be paid are in-kind or reimbursement to the Government, the amount of the travel services to be paid, accounting information and the travel authorization number.
- A clearance email from the Division of Grants, OPS stating that SAMHSA is not providing grants to the sponsoring organization.
- A clearance email from the Division of Contracts, OPS stating that SAMHSA is not in a contractual relationship with the sponsoring organization.
- A clearance email from the Administrative Team Leader in the Division of Operational Support, OPS stating that there are no PRISM documents for contractual supplies or services with the sponsoring organization.

Upon receipt and approval of the above documentation, the travel authorization will be approved in GovTrip, by your servicing Administrative Officer. Since this area of travel

consists of specific parameters and restrictions, the applicable regulations and corresponding policies **must** be followed.

Per Diem in the Local Travel Area

The local travel area is defined as a minimum 50-mile direct driving distance from your permanent office site or usual residence site to a temporary duty site. Although per diem, *i.e.*, lodging and M&IE, is usually not permitted in the local area, in rare and justifiable circumstances, you may be allowed per diem when official business is being conducted. GSA makes a critical distinction between two concepts:

1. The corporate limits of the city or town where the employee's permanent duty station (office location) is situated (*i.e.*, the corporate limits of that city/town) constitutes the "official duty station."
2. When outside the official duty station but within the vicinity surrounding it, the rules differ. This is referred to as the "local travel area," which is defined by the agency, pursuant to the authority granted in the FTR. HHS defines the local travel area as a minimum driving distance of 50 miles, by the most direct route possible, from the employee's office/permanent duty station. (In other words, a temporary duty site within 50 miles from the employee's regular office would be considered part of the local travel area).

Per diem will not be paid in the city/town where the employee regularly works, as defined in subsection 1 above. Per diem will not be paid in the local travel area as defined in subsection 2 above unless the following narrow exemption applies, in which **all** criteria must be met:

- a. The local travel is being performed to attend or participate in a conference, meeting, or training for which the agency had any influence over or input into the site selection; **and**
- b. The local travel assignment will last at least three consecutive nights and four days and entail at least nine and one-half consecutive hours of work per day on each of those days; **and**
- c. It is clearly within the Government's interest, for accomplishment of its mission, to permit a particular employee to stay overnight at the site of the local travel assignment on one or more of those night(s), not necessarily consecutive; **and**
- d. That employee would be required to perform an extensive amount of driving (defined as at least 80 miles) **each way** between his/her residence and the site of the local travel assignment, on a daily basis (in a carpool situation, each employee must live at least 80 miles from the

TDY site to qualify for this exception); **and**

- e. Significant safety issues are raised by the combination of the extended hours of work and the extensive amount of driving for the employee performing this local travel assignment.

NOTE: In making their discretionary decision on whether these conditions apply, the officials should take into account factors such as the region of the United States in which the temporary duty is being performed, normal traffic patterns and corresponding speed limits, length of each extended workday and cumulative effect on the particular employee involved, etc. If a per diem allowance is authorized for any day of local travel under this exception, a travel order must be issued to the employee for such day(s).

For further clarification see HHS Travel Manual, Chapter 4-20.

Tolls are to be paid via cash and claimed on a local travel voucher. Receipts should be submitted with the voucher. Using EZ-Pass is prohibited.

Annual Leave While in TDY Travel Status

Within the following guidelines, you may take annual leave in conjunction with official business travel if authorized in advance and noted on the Travel Authorization. You are responsible for informing your supervisor and timekeeper of any scheduled annual leave.

- ! Domestic/Non-Foreign Travel- OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs must use discretion when authorizing annual leave in line with travel to a domestic or non-foreign site, especially when the site is considered a resort spot, a recreationally attractive area, or a sightseeing attraction. The SAMHSA policy is annual leave days cannot exceed duty days, excluding travel days.
- ! International Travel - It is HHS policy that only 2 days of annual leave per fiscal year may be authorized, and both days of leave must be taken on a single trip. This must be approved in advance by the Department and listed on the NFT.
- ! HHS-348 Sponsored Travel- It is HHS policy that no annual leave may be authorized with sponsored travel to a domestic, non-foreign, or international site.

Travel Management Center Contact Information

OMEGA World Travel's customer service number is 1-877-433-1162, Monday -Friday, 8:00 a.m. 9:00 p.m.

Should you experience a problem or emergency before or after the above stated hours, which affects your travel itinerary, contact OMEGA World Travel on 1-866-892-0810.

Travel Emergencies

While in travel status, should you become incapacitated by illness or injury not due to your own misconduct, you should immediately contact a member of your Administrative Office. You are strongly encouraged to take the name and phone number of a contact person with you on your trip. Below is a list of your respective Administrative Officers and USS Travel Staff:

Administrative Officers

OA, OAS, OPPB, OPS - Michelle Lee, (240) 276-1007
CMHS - Erica Talbert, (240) 276-1013
CSAP - Jennifer Wilson, (240) 276-2318
CSAT - Valarie Rojas, (240) 276-1015
Team Leader- Sandy Dinisio, (240) 276-1005

USS Travel Staff

CMHS – Elise Meyer, 240-276-1903

CSAP, OAS – Anju Sardana, 240-276-2489

CSAT, OPPB – Samita Ghosh, 240-276-2274

USS Travel Staff Supervisor – VACANT

Glossary of Common Travel Terms

Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) -A method of reimbursing travelers for their actual costs (not to exceed (NTE) 300% of the per diem rate for the geographical location) when costs have uniformly escalated in the location due to special events or unusual circumstances.

Common (Commercial) Carrier -Any firm furnishing commercial transportation. This includes airplanes, trains, ships, and buses.

Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA) - A pre-determined maximum allowance of up to 25% greater than the applicable locality-lodging portion of the per diem rate.

Contract City-Pair Airfare - The General Services Administration (GSA) makes awards to U.S. certified air carriers in order to furnish Federal employees with passenger transportation service at reduced fares between selected U.S. cities/airports and between selected U.S. and international cities/airports. These airfares represent coach class seating accommodations.

Domestic Travel - Travel to the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

International Travel - Travel outside the 50 United States and other defined non-foreign sites. Travel to the former U.S. Trust Territories in the Pacific (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Marshall Islands), now independent, is considered international travel.

Lodging - Refers to overnight sleeping facilities; this is part of the per diem allowance.

Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) - The meals portion of this allowance covers expenses for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Incidental expenses include: (1) fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants in foreign countries; and (2) transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals can be obtained at the TDY site.

Miscellaneous Expenses - Other expenses in addition to per diem such as laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothes, hotel taxes, ATM and cash advance fees, car rental, taxis for transportation to business locations, airport parking fees, official phone calls and other necessary business expenses approved by **your SAMHSA Approving Official**.

Non-Foreign Travel - Travel to Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and any other territory under U.S. jurisdiction.

Notification of Foreign Travel (NFT) - All HHS staff planning to travel abroad on official Government business must submit a notification through the web-based HHS NFT System. An NFT is required for all official international travel regardless of the source of funding for the trip.

The NFT alerts HHS of the travel and is used to prepare a cable requesting country clearance from the U.S. Embassy of the country to be visited.

Per Diem -A fixed allowance for daily payment of lodging, meals and related incidental expenses. Reimbursement for lodging is based on actual cost not to exceed the prescribed fixed rate.

Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) - Fixed rates per mile are allowed for operating privately owned conveyances (automobile, motorcycle, or airplane) when such use is authorized or approved as advantageous to the Government.

Temporary Duty (TDY) -Authorized temporary assignment away from your official permanent duty station for the purpose of conducting official Government business.

Travel Management Center (TMC) -A travel agency under contract with the Government, that is responsible for making arrangements for official Government travel. All such travel is to be made through the TMC. OMEGA World Travel is the TMC selected for HHS.